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*Steering Committee of the International
Monitoring Operation on the Population and
Housing Censuses in Bosnia and Herzegovina*

Twenty-Fourth Assessment Report

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Executive Summary

1. Since the last SC mission end of May the data processing phase was finalised in order to be able to disseminate the census results before the deadline provided in the Census Law of July 1st 2016. This could be achieved because of the full commitment and over-time work of the staff of the BiH Agency for Statistics and of the two Entity Statistical Institutes, but also with the outstanding support of the Technical Assistance experts.
2. The objective of the SC mission was to conduct the assessment of the final phases of the census after the dissemination of the final results on June 30 2016. To achieve this objective, the SC conducted a thorough review of the final phases of the census process: data editing, validation, evaluation, dissemination as well as the measures for protection of personal data and archiving.
3. Regarding the editing phase, the opinion of the SC is that the editing procedure was properly designed and implemented. The SC observed that the Technical Assistance managed to combine the two approaches of probabilistic methods and deterministic rules in an efficient way. In terms of rates of imputation and similarity of the distributions before/after the application of the editing procedure, the results are generally fine with the exception of few items for which valid explanations were provided.
4. The SC inspected the databases to check if all personal information was encrypted, to check the system for control of access to the databases, and to verify the results disseminated. No irregularity was found. Some recommendations for the optimization of the databases to make easier the tabulations were provided.
5. In terms of validation of census results with external sources, the SC assessed that this activity was performed only on a limited number of key data, because of the difficulties encountered in identifying external reliable sources to use for such comparison. Indeed, the others surveys conducted in the last years in BiH are based on an out-of-date sample and estimated population figures which are different with each other's.
6. The Post Enumeration Survey (PES) methodology used for the evaluation of the quality of census results is consistent with international standards and recommendations, thanks to the high level of expertise of the Technical Assistance. The results in terms of coverage, which indicate a net 4.6% over-coverage, are consistent with what was observed during the enumeration by the IMO monitoring operation, and are in the usual range of coverage of censuses internationally.
7. The SC assessed the quality of the census results by reviewing the published tables and requesting additional ones, as well as comparing census results with external data and neighbouring countries. The census results are generally internally consistent. Comparisons with the few external sources available show consistence of the relative distributions; and differences of absolute figures in the magnitude of the coverage rate provided by the PES. International comparisons with neighbouring countries confirm the plausibility of the census results.

8. Since the dissemination of the first publication on June 30, the preparation of the publication of 8 other thematic reports is under way and is expected to be finalised by the end of 2016. Online dissemination is not very advanced and should be given strong impetus. More attention could be given to the user-friendliness of the publications.

9. In terms of communication, the new management of the Agency seems more aware of the importance of communication than the previous one. On the other side the public is aware of the differences of opinion about the methodology within the management of the Agency and with the Statistical Institute of Republika Srpska. This has indeed been a challenge and made it difficult to have coherent strategies and uniform responses to the media. The preparation of Q&A related to the quality of census data is a good preparation of responses to attempts in the media to question the quality of the census.

10. Finally, the procedure for archiving/destroying census materials, including electronic databases, is not very advanced and the SC expressed strong recommendations in that regard to avoid any risk of disclosure of personal information, in particular regarding the sensitive information of ethnicity, religion and mother tongue.

11. In conclusion, the SC considers that the final phases of the census were conducted in a satisfactory manner, due to proper design and implementation of the data processing phase and the considerable efforts to ensure quality during previous phases of the census. While the online dissemination of the results is still not advanced and limited time was available for validation of the results, completing the final phases required strong commitment of the statistical institutes.

Introduction and Background

13. A Population and Housing Census shall take place in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in accordance with the Law on the Census of the Population, Households and Dwellings in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2013 as adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 3 February 2012. The Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina has invited the European Commission to organise the international monitoring of the Census. Therefore, the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina signed on 18 April 2012 a Memorandum of Understanding to agree upon the following:

- The general objective of the International Monitoring Operation (IMO) of the Population and Housing Census in Bosnia and Herzegovina is to monitor the compliance of the whole Census exercise, from the preparation to the data dissemination, with:
- International standards on population and housing censuses as defined by UNECE and Eurostat, and as adopted by the Conference of European Statisticians as Recommendations for the 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing;
- Regulation (EC) No 763/2008 on population and housing censuses, and its implementing measures;
- The Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, adopted by the UN Statistical Commission, as well as the European Statistics Code of Practice, promulgated by the European Commission;
- Standards on data protection and confidentiality, as provided for in the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data of the Council of Europe, and the relevant European Union regulations in force.

14. The Operation will be carried out by a Committee of International Organisations, the Management Group (IMO MG) assisted by a Senior Census Expert, experts in population censuses, one or more experts in information technology and persons monitoring the census enumeration in the field.

15. The Senior Census Expert, the Census Experts and the IT Experts will assess the compliance of the Census in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the requirements listed in the Memorandum of Understanding, but they will not provide technical assistance.

16. Under the guidance of the Committee and the Senior Census Expert, the Census Experts shall:

- Examine the technical preparation of the Census including the pilot Census and post-enumeration survey, in particular the drafting of questionnaires and manuals;
- Monitor the collection, processing and dissemination of Census data, verifying the accordance with the requirements defined above;
- Control the fair and proper computation at all levels and whether the confidential nature of the individual data is fully guaranteed;
- Investigate any other matter with relevance for the Census.

17. The Management Group has designated Mr. Jean-Michel Durr as Senior Census Expert and Mr. Roberto Bianchini, Mr. Bent Noerby Bonde, Ms. Meryem Demirci, Ms. Kateri-

na Kostadinova-Daskalovska, and Mr. Guido Pieraccini as experts in population censuses. The Senior Census Expert and the Experts in population censuses form the IMO Steering Committee (IMO SC) of international experts.

18. The first mission of the IMO SC was conducted from 23 to 26 April 2012. The objective of this mission was to assess the preparations for the population and housing census in their main components, including the preparation of the pilot census. The report of the SC was sent by the Senior Census Manager on May 12 to the IMO MG.

19. The second mission was conducted from 26 to 29 of June 2012. The objective of this mission was to assess the progress made since the first mission in preparations for the population and housing census, including the preparation of the pilot census.

20. The third mission took place on 17 and 18 of September 2012 and was conducted by two members of the SC, namely, Mr. Jean-Michel Durr and Ms. Katerina Kostadinova-Daskalovska. The objective of the mission was to assess the implementation of recommendations made in previous reports and to assess the preparation of the pilot census, planned for October 15-29.

21. The fourth mission took place between 10 and 29 of October 2012 and was conducted successively by the members of the SC (5 days each, except the senior expert from 10 to 19 of October). The objective of the mission was to observe the conduct of the pilot census in the field. In addition, a team of four observers, composed of Lidija Naumovska, Gabor Rosza, Jean-Paul Sardon and Per Schöning was present during the whole period of the pilot census. Each of them covered several municipalities, in order to observe the pilot census field operations in all the 60 enumeration areas (EAs) sampled in the pilot.

22. The fifth mission took place from 19 to 21 of November 2012 (3 days) and was conducted by one member of the SC, Ms. Katerina Kostadinova-Daskalovska. The objective of the mission was to observe the conduct of the Post enumeration survey (PES) of the Pilot census in the field. The expert covered all 6 EAs (in 6 municipalities) sampled in PES sample in order to observe the PES field operations.

23. The sixth mission took place from 10 to 13 of December 2012 and was conducted by four members of the SC: Mr. Roberto Bianchini, Mr. Bent Noerby Bonde, Ms. Katerina Kostadinova-Daskalovska and Mr. Guido Pieraccini. The objective of the mission was to hear from the Statistical Institutions about the lessons learned from the Pilot Census and to assess whether the preparations are on level that could allow conducting a census in April 2013.

24. The seventh mission took place from 12 to 15 February 2013 and was conducted by one member of the SC, Mr. Roberto Bianchini. The objective of the mission was to assess the situation on the progress of preparation and implementation of the IMO recommendations in the new context of the postponement of the census, with a focus on the achievement of the deadlines regarding cartographic preparations. A second objective was to collect information and materials for a more detailed assessment on the progress of census preparatory activities to be made by all members of the SC in March 2013.

25. The eighth mission was conducted by the complete SC from 18 to 22 March 2013. The objective of the mission was to assess in detail progress made in the preparations with regard to the milestones given after the sixth mission in December 2012, when the SC recommended to postpone the census to October 2013.

26. The ninth mission was conducted by two members of the SC, Jean-Michel Durr and Katerina Kostadinova-Daskalovska from 22 to 25 April 2013. The objective of the mission was to assess the progress made in the preparations with regard to the milestones given in the sixth mission and updated in previous missions.
27. The tenth mission was conducted by the full SC from 28 to 31 May 2013. The objective of the mission was to assess whether the progress made in the preparations was sufficient to consider that the country was ready to conduct a census in October 2013.
28. The eleventh mission was conducted by three members of the SC, Mr. Jean-Michel Durr, Mr. Bent Noerby Bonde and Mr. Guido Pieraccini from 16 to 19 July 2013. The objective of the mission was to assess whether the preparations were still on track after the positive assessment of the 10th mission to conduct a census in October 2013. A special focus was put on the preparation of data processing.
29. The twelfth mission was conducted by four members of the SC, Mr. Roberto Bianchini, Mr. Bent Noerby Bonde, Ms. Katerina Kostadinova-Daskalovska and Mr. Guido Pieraccini from 3 to 6 September 2013. The objective of the mission was to assess the state of play regarding to forthcoming census field activities (including PES) and data processing activities following the field activities as well as the overall census preparations in accordance to the Census milestones and SC recommendations and advices given through the previous missions and SC reports.
30. The thirteenth mission was conducted by five members of the SC: Mr. Roberto Bianchini and Mr. Guido Pieraccini from 27 September to 4 October, Ms. Katerina Kostadinova-Daskalovska from 4 October to 11 October; and Mr. Jean-Michel Durr and Ms. Meryem Demirci from 11 October to 18 October. The objective of the mission was to monitor the enumeration of the census, including its final preparations and final operations. During this mission, the SC was assisted by a team of 27 international observers, deployed all over the country.
31. The fourteenth mission was conducted by one member of the SC: Ms. Katerina Kostadinova-Daskalovska from 1 to 3 November 2013. The objective of the mission was to monitor the conducting of the Post-enumeration survey following the Census. During this mission, the SC was assisted by a team of 5 international observers, deployed all over the country from 1 to 10 November.
32. The fifteenth mission was conducted by one member of the SC: Mr. Guido Pieraccini from 17 to 18 December 2013. The objective of the mission was to assess that the data processing system was functional and in accordance with the SC recommendations.
33. The sixteenth mission was conducted by five members of the SC from 11 to 14 February 2014. The objective of the mission was to assess the starting of the data processing and the implementation of the SC recommendations.
34. The seventeenth mission was conducted by one member of the SC: Mr. Guido Pieraccini from 21 to 23 May 2014. The objective of the mission was to control that the data processing was working smoothly and that the timing for completion of the phase was in accordance with the SC recommendations.
35. The eighteenth mission was conducted by four members of the SC from 3 to 6 June 2014. The objective of the mission was to assess the situation of data capture and the state of

preparation of further steps, editing and dissemination as well as the Post Enumeration Survey.

36. The nineteenth mission was conducted by two members of the SC, Ms. Katerina Kostadinova-Daskalovska and Mr. Guido Pieraccini from 15 to 17 September 2014. The objective of the mission was to assess the data capture and editing phases, as well as PES and dissemination preparation.

37. The twentieth mission was conducted by the complete SC from 18 to 21 November 2014. The objective of the mission was to assess in detail progress made in the data processing phase, as well as PES and dissemination preparation.

38. The twenty-first mission was conducted by three members of the SC, Mr. Jean-Michel Durr, Ms. Meryem Demirci and Mr. Guido Pieraccini from 24 to 27 February 2015. The objective of the mission was to assess in detail progress made in the data processing phase, as well as PES and dissemination preparation.

39. The twenty-second mission was conducted by two members of the SC, Mr. Jean-Michel Durr and Ms. Meryem Demirci from 1 to 4 February 2016. The objective of the mission was to meet the new management of the Agency for Statistics and Statistical Office of the Federation and to assess in detail progress made since the last Steering Committee mission one year ago.

40. The twenty-third mission was conducted by the SC Senior expert, Mr. Jean-Michel Durr from 25 to 27 May 2016, and the conclusions and recommendations were discussed with the other members of the SC. The objective of the mission was to assess the consequences of the recent decision of the Director of the Agency for Statistics related to the single process to determine the resident status of enumerated persons.

41. The twenty-fourth and present mission was conducted by the complete SC from 26 to 30 September 2016. The objective of the mission was to conduct the assessment of the final phases of the census after the dissemination of the final results on June 30.

42. The expert wish to express his gratitude to the directors and staff of the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BHAS), the Statistical Institutes of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska (RS) for their availability and collaboration, and to the staff of Council of Europe for the organisation of the mission.